SLAVE TRADE.

A

FULL ACCOUNT

OF THIS SPECIES

OF

COMMERCE;

WITH

ARGUMENTS AGAINST IT,

SPIRITED AND PHILOSOPHICAL:

BY THE CELEBRATED

PHILOSOPHER AND HISTORIAN,

ABBÉ RAYNAL.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

I cannot now kill my *Brother, but I can make him Bleed under the Whip of an Executioner; I can overwhelm him with Sorrows, Dredgery, and Want; I can Injure him every Way, and ſecretly undermine the Principles and Springs of Life; I can deſtroy by ſlow Puniſhments, the wretched Infant, that a Negro Woman carried in her Womb.*——

THE LAW PERMITTING THIS PROTECTS ONLY LIFE.

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A

FULL ACCOUNT

OF THIS SPECIES OF

COMMERCE, &c.

NEW COMMERCE OF GUINEA, OR THE SLAVE TRADE.

THE property which ſome men have acquired over others in Guinea, is of very high antiquity. It is generally eſtabliſhed there, excepting in ſome ſmall diſtricts, where liberty hath, as it were, retired and is ſtill maintained. No proprietor, however, has a right to ſell a man who is born in a ſtate of ſervitude. He can only diſpoſe of thoſe ſlaves whom he gets, whether by war, in which every priſoner is a ſlave unleſs exchanged, or in lieu of compenſation for ſome injury; or if he hath received them as a teſtimony of acknowledgment. This law, which ſeems to be made in favour of one who is born a ſlave, to indulge him with the enjoyment of his family and of his country, is yet ineffectual, ſince the Europeans have eſtabliſhed luxury on the coaſts of Africa. It is every day eluded by concerted quarrels, which two proprietors mutually diſſemble, in order to be reciprocally condemned, each in his turn, to a fine, which is paid in perſons born ſlaves, the diſpoſal of whom is allowed by the ſanction of the ſame law.

CORRUPTION, contrary to its ordinary progreſs, hath advanced from private perſons to princes. The procuring of ſlaves hath given frequent occaſion to wars, as they are excited in Europe in order to obtain ſoldiers. The cuſtom has been eſtabliſhed of puniſhing with ſlavery not only thoſe who have attempted the lives and properties of citizens, but thoſe alſo who were incapable of paying their debts, and thoſe who have violated conjugal faith. This puniſhment, in proceſs of time, has been inflicted for the moſt trivial offences, after having been at firſt reſerved only for the greateſt crimes. Prohibitions even of things indifferent have been conſtantly multiplied, in order to increaſe the revenues raiſed from the fines by increaſing the number of offences. Injuſtice hath known no bounds or reſtraints. At a great diſtance from the coaſt, there are chiefs, who give orders for every thing they meet with in the villages around them to be carried off. The children are thrown into ſacks: the men and women are gagged to ſtifle their cries. If the ravagers are ſtopped by a ſuperior force, they are conducted before the prince, who always diſowns the commiſſion he has given, and under pretence of doing juſtice, inſtantly ſells his agents to the ſhips he has treated with.

NOTWITHSTANDING theſe infamous arts, the people of the coaſt have found it impoſſible to ſupply the demands of the merchants. They have experienced what every nation muſt, that can trade only with its nominal ſtock. Slaves are to the commerce of Europeans in Africa, what gold is in the commerce we carry on in the New world. The heads of negroes repreſent the ſtock of the ſtate of

Guinea.

Guinea. Every day this ſtock is carried off, and nothing is left them but articles of conſumption. Their capital gradually vaniſhes, becauſe it cannot be renewed, by reaſon of the ſpeedy conſumptions. Thus the trade for blacks would long ſince have been entirely loſt, if the inhabitants of the coaſts had not imparted their luxury to the people of the inland countries, from whom they now draw the greateſt part of the ſlaves that are put into our hands. Thus the trade of the Europeans, by gradual advances, has almoſt exhauſted the only vendible commodities of this nation.

In the ſpace of twenty years this circumſtance hath raiſed the price of ſlaves almoſt to four times above the former coſt: the reaſon is this. The ſlaves are chiefly paid for in merchandiſe from the Eaſt-Indies, which has doubled its value in Europe. A double quantity of theſe goods muſt be given in Africa. Thus the colonies of America, where the ſale for blacks is concluded, are obliged to ſupport theſe ſeveral augmentations, and conſequently to pay four times more than they formerly did.

Notwithstanding this, the diſtant proprietor who ſells his ſlave, receives a leſs quantity of merchandiſe than the perſon received fifty years ago, who ſold his ſlave in the neighbourhood of the coaſt. The profits intercepted by paſſing through different hands, the expences of tranſport, the impoſts, ſometimes of three *per cent*, that muſt be paid to thoſe princes through whoſe territories they paſs, ſink the difference betwixt the ſum which the firſt proprietor receives, and that which the European trader pays.

Theſe expences continually increaſe on account of the great diſtances of the places where there are ſtill ſlaves to be ſold. The further off the firſt ſale is, the greater will be the difficulties attending the journey. They will become ſuch, that of the ſum which the European merchant will be able to pay, there will remain ſo little to offer to the firſt ſeller, that he will rather chuſe to keep his ſlave. All trade of this kind will then be at an end. In order, therefore, to ſupport it effectually, our traders muſt furniſh at an exorbitant price, and ſell in proportion to the colonies; which, on their part, not being able to diſpoſe of their produce but at a very advanced price, will no longer find a conſumption for it. But till that time comes, which is, perhaps, not ſo diſtant as the coloniſts imagine, they will, without the leaſt remorſe, continue to make the lives and labours of the negroes ſubſervient to their intereſts. They will find navigators who will hazard the purchaſing of them, and theſe will meet with tyrants who will ſell them.

Slave merchants collect themſelves into companies, and forming a ſpecies of caravans, in the ſpace of two or three hundred leagues they conduct ſeveral files of thirty or forty ſlaves, all laden with water and corn, which are neceſſary to their ſubſiſtence in thoſe barren deſerts through which they paſs. The manner of ſecuring them without much incommoding their march, is ingeniouſly contrived. A fork of wood from eight to nine feet long is put round the neck of each ſlave. A pin of iron rivetted ſecures the fork at the back part in ſuch a manner that the head cannot diſengage itſelf. The handle of the fork, the wood of which is very heavy, falls before, and ſo embarraſſes the perſon

who

who is tied to it, that though he has his arms and legs at liberty, he can neither walk, nor lift up the fork. When they get ready for their march, they range the ſlaves on the ſame line, and ſupport and tie the extremity of each fork on the ſhoulder of the foremaſt ſlave, and proceed in this manner from one to another, till they come to the firſt, the extremity of whoſe fork is carried by one of the guides. Few reſtraints are impoſed that are not felt by the perſons who impoſe them. In order that theſe traders may enjoy the refreſhment of ſleep without uneaſineſs, they tie the arm of every ſlave to the tail of the fork which he carries. In this condition he can neither run away nor make any attempt to recover his liberty. Theſe precautions have been found indiſpenſable, becauſe, if the ſlave can but break his chain, he becomes free. The public faith, which ſecures to the proprietor the poſſeſſion of his ſlave, and which at all times delivers him up into his hands, is ſilent with regard to a ſlave and a trader who exerciſes the moſt contemptible of all profeſſions.

GREAT numbers of ſlaves arrive together, eſpecially when they come from diſtant countries. This arrangement is neceſſary, in order to diminiſh the expence which is unavoidable in conducting them. The interval between one voyage and another, which by this ſyſtem of œconomy is already made too diſtant, may become ſtill greater by particular circumſtances. The moſt uſual are the rains, which cauſe the rivers to overflow, and put a ſtop to this trade. The ſeaſon moſt favourable to travelling in the interior parts of Africa, is from February to September; and

and it is from September to March, that the return of theſe ſlave traders produces the greateſt plenty of this traffic on the coaſts.

ACCOUNT OF THE PLACES AND MANNER IN WHICH THE SLAVE-TRADE IS CARRIED ON.

THE trade of the Europeans is carried on to the ſouth and north of the line. The firſt coaſt, known by the name of Angola, hath but three ports, which are equally free to all nations; theſe are Cabanda, Loango, and Malemba; and beſides theſe, two more, of which the Portugueſe are the ſole maſters, St. Paul de Loando, and St. Philip de Benguela. Theſe latitudes nearly ſupply one third of the blacks that are carried to America, who are neither the moſt intelligent, the moſt laborious, nor the moſt robuſt. The ſecond coaſt, known by the general name of the Gold coaſt, abounds more in harbours, but they are not equally favourable to commerce. The reſtraint occaſioned by the forts, which the Europeans have erected in ſeveral places, drives away the dealers in ſlaves. They are to be met with in much larger numbers at Anambou and Calbary, where commerce is entirely free.

In 1768, there were exported out of Africa, 104,100 ſlaves. The Engliſh brought up 53,100 of them for their highlands; their coloniſts on the north continent 6,300; the French 23,500; the Dutch 11,300; the Portugueſe 8,700; and the Danes 1,200. All theſe unhappy men did not arrive at the place of their deſtination. In the ordinary courſe of things, the eighth part muſt have periſhed in their paſſage. Every nation hath employed in its colo-

nies

nies the cultivators it hath purchaſed. Great-Britain alone has ceded four thouſand of them to the Spaniards, and fraudulently introduced about three thouſand in the French ſettlements.

It would be a very great miſtake to imagine that America regularly receives the ſame number of negroes. Not to mention the conſiderable diminution in the number of expeditions to Guinea, on account of the war, the arrangements of the laſt peace have occaſioned new lands to be cultivated, which required extraordinary ſupplies. The number of men muſt be reduced to ſixty thouſand, of which the African coaſts are deprived every year. Suppoſing that each of theſe ſlaves coſts on the ſpot three hundred livres*, thoſe barbarous regions receive eighteen millions†, for ſo horrid a ſacrifice.

The French merchant will exclaim, we doubt not, at the price which ſlaves are here ſtated at. It is univerſally known that he purchaſes them much dearer; and that the Engliſh and Dutch purchaſe them at a lower price, becauſe they are not reduced by the inſufficiency of their Aſiatic commerce and the imperfection of certain manufactures proper to the African trade, to pay, as the French merchant does, for commiſſion, freight and inſurance, in order to draw from foreign ports ſome merchandiſe, without which trade cannot be carried on. The Portugueſe have ſtill another advantage over theſe nations. They carry on their expeditions from Brazil; their exchanges are generally made with the tobacco and brandy of their own country;

* 13l. 2s. 6d. † 787,500l.

try; and they maintain an excluſive trade on the coaſts, which are two hundred leagues long, and forty broad.

EXCEPTING the Portugueſe, all nations pay for ſlaves with the ſame merchandiſe. Theſe are ſabres, firelocks, gun-powder, iron, brandy, hard-ware, woollen ſtuffs, eſpecially Eaſt-India cottons, or thoſe which are wrought in Europe, and coloured in the ſame manner. The people north of the line have adopted, inſtead of money, little white ſhells, which we import among them from the Maldives. South of the line, the uropean trade is deprived of this object of exchange. There ſmall pieces of ſtraw ſtuff, eighteen inches long, and twelve broad, are uſed as marks of value. This real mark is only the fortieth part of an ideal value, which they call *piece*.

THIS word, from the time the Europeans have frequented Africa, is become the numerical term of all things that bear the greateſt value. The price of each ſpecies of merchandiſe imported thither is invariably fixed under the denomination of one, two, three, or more pieces. Each piece, in its original value, is nearly worth a piſtole, and for ſome time paſt, thirty-five or thirty-ſix pieces have been given for a negro, all taxes included. The greateſt of them is the fee that muſt be given the factor, who always mediates between the vender and the purchaſer, whom it is neceſſary to make a friend of, and who is become of ſo much the more conſequence, as the competition between the Europeans has increaſed, and the want of ſlaves has been more ſenſibly felt. Another tax, which though aſked under the name of a preſent, is no leſs an extorted tribute,

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is, that which muſt be paid to the prince and his chief officers, for the liberty of trading. The ſum is in proportion to the ſize of the veſſel, and may be valued at three *per cent.*

ARE FORTS NECESSARY IN ORDER TO PROCURE SLAVES?

THE European nations have been of opinion that it was conducive to the utility of their commerce, to form ſettlements on the coaſt of Africa. The Portugueſe, who firſt traverſed theſe immenſe regions, left every where the marks of their ambition, rather than of their ſagacity. The weak and numberleſs colonies which they poured in, ſoon forgot a country, which had itſelf forgotten them. In proceſs of time, there remained of theſe great conqueſts nothing but that vaſt ſpace which extends from Zara to cape Negroe, from whence Brazil ſtill procures its ſlaves. They have alſo preſerved ſome iſles of little conſequence. Thoſe which are ſituated at the weſt end of Cape de Verd, produce ſalt, feed cattle, and ſerve as a place of refreſhment for veſſels going to the Eaſt-Indies. Prince's Iſland, and St. Thomas, which are at the entrance of the Gulph of Gabon, ſupply navigators with freſh proviſions, who, after leaving the Gold coaſt, ſail to America. They are both of no importance in the commercial world.

THOUGH Portugal, even in the earlieſt times, derived but very moderate advantages from the coaſts of Africa, it was yet ſo jealous of the ſovereignity which is exerciſed there, in virtue of its diſcovery, that it thought no nation had a right to approach them. The Engliſh, who firſt ventured to queſtion the right of theſe pretenſions, about the year 1553, ſuſtained the affront of having their veſſels ſeized.

ſeized. A national war immediately enſued, and the ſuperiority of arms put a final period to this tyranny. In proceſs of time, the excluſive companies of England, which had embarked in this trade, ſucceſſively formed factories without number, of which that of Cape Corſe, ſituated on the Gold coaſt, and that of James, placed in an iſland at the mouth of the river Gambia, were for a conſiderable time the principal and the moſt uſeful. Though many of them had been abandoned, there ſtill remained ſixteen, when the parliament, rouzed by the public clamour, determined in 1752, to put a ſtop to this monopoly. The nation purchaſed of the proprietors all theſe fortified magazines, for the ſum of 1,523,198 livres 13 ſols*, where there were no more than one hundred and twenty men. The expence of maintaining them amounts annually to about 292,500 livres†.

The Engliſh almoſt entirely engroſſed the African trade, when the Dutch, in 1637, undertook to ſhare it with them. The war they were carrying on againſt Spain, authoriſed them to attack the Portugueſe ſettlements in Guinea; and they made themſelves maſters of both of them in a very ſhort time. The treaty of 1641 ſecured the property of them to the republic. This ſtate pretending to enter into all the rights of the firſt poſſeſſor, intended to exclude her rival from theſe latitudes, and ceaſed not to moleſt her till the peace of Breda. Of all theſe conqueſts, that of fort Mina on the Gold coaſt, was found the moſt important. It had been built, in 1452, by the Portugueſe, who had enriched its territory by planting ſugar-canes,

* 66,639l. 8s. 9½d. † 12,726l. 17s. 6d.

canes, maize, and different kinds of excellent fruits; and had ſupplied it with a number of uſeful animals, which they had imported thither. They drew from thence a conſiderable quantity of gold and ſome ſlaves. This ſettlement did not degenerate in the hands of the Hollanders, who made it the centre of all the factories they had acquired, and of all the buſineſs they carried on in Africa.

The proſperity of the Dutch, in this part of the world, was at its height, when they were attacked by Lewis XIV. This prince who aſpired after univerſal glory, ſeized an opportunity offered him by the war of 1672, of extending the terror which his flag carried with it on all the ſeas, even to the borders of Africa. He took from the Dutch the forts of Arguin and Portendic, which were at that time the general market for gums. His ſubjects afterwards eſtabliſhed on the coaſt ſeveral poſts which were obliged to be abandoned, either becauſe they were injudiciouſly choſen, or becauſe they were not ſufficient forces to ſupport them. Since the time that France, by a ſeries of errors and misfortunes, hath found herſelf under a neceſſity of giving up Senegal to the Engliſh by the laſt treaty, ſhe hath nothing now remaining but the factory of Juida, and the iſland of Gorea, where there is not, nor ever will be any trade. Some years ago a ſettlement that would have been of advantage to Anambou, began to be formed, when the workmen were driven away by cannon ſhot fired in a time of full peace, by the ſhips of Great Britain. An able merchant who was then at London, at the news of this outrage, expreſſed his aſtoniſhment at a conduct ſo imprudent *Sir*, ſaid a miniſter to him, who was in great favour in

this enlightened people, *if we were to be juſt with the French, we ſhould not exiſt thirty years longer.*

The Danes who ſettled in Africa a little after the middle of the laſt century, and who purchaſed of the king of Aquambo the two forts of Frederickburg and Chriſtianburg, ſituated on the golden coaſt near each other, never experienced a ſimilar treatment. They owed the tranquillity which they enjoyed to the inſignificancy of the trade they carried on. It was in ſo low a ſtate, that they only fitted out a ſingle veſſel every two or three years. This trade hath been extended for ſome time paſt, but is ſtill far from being conſiderable.

If we except the Portugueſe, all the European nations ſubjected their African trade to excluſive charters. The companies in poſſeſſion of this monopoly, the errors of which all governments at laſt have felt and put a ſtop to, fortified their factories, both in order to drive away ſtrangers, and to oblige the natives to ſell to none but themſelves. When the diſtricts, in which theſe forts were erected had no more ſlaves to deliver, trade languiſhed, becauſe the people in the inland countries preferred the conveying their ſlaves into free ports, where they might chuſe the purchaſers. Thus the factories, which had been of ſuch utility when the coaſt was populous, are no longer ſo valuable, ſince the factors of them are obliged to make long voyages, in order to complete their purchaſe. The advantage of theſe eſtabliſhments was loſt, when the object of their commerce was exhauſted.

IN THE SLAVE TRADE SMALL VESSELS ARE PREFERABLE TO LARGE ONES.

THE difficulty of procuring ſlaves naturally points out the neceſſity of employing ſmall ſhips for carring them off. At a time when a ſmall territory, adjacent to the coaſt, furniſhed in a fortnight or three weeks, a whole cargo, it was prudent to employ large veſſels, becauſe there was a poſſibility of underſtanding, looking after, and encouraging the ſlaves, who all ſpoke the ſame language. At preſent when each ſhip can ſcarce procure ſixty or eighty ſlaves a month, brought from the diſtance of two or three hundred leagues, exhauſted by the fatigues of a long journey, obliged to remain on board the veſſels they are embarked upon five or ſix months in ſight of their country, having all different idioms, uncertain of the deſtiny that awaits them, ſtruck with the prepoſſeſſion that the Europeans eat them and drink their blood; their extreme uneaſineſs alone deſtroys them, or occaſions diſorders which become contagious by the impoſſibility of ſeparating the ſick from the healthy. A ſmall ſhip deſtined to carry 2 or 3 hundred negroes, by means of the ſhort ſtay it makes on the coaſt, avoids half the accidents and loſſes to which a ſhip capable of holding five or ſix hundred ſlaves is expoſed. Thus the Engliſh, who have extended this commerce as far as poſſible, have adopted the cuſtom of ſending only veſſels of a hundred and twenty, or a hundred and thirty tons, into the ſeas which extend from the Senegal to the river Volta, and to fit out veſſels a little larger only for Colbar, where the trade is more conſiderable, and where they make their principal cargoes. The French are the only people who obſtinately

adhere to the ancient practice. The town of Nantes, however, which alone carries on as much trade in Africa as all the other ports of the kingdom together, begins to feel the abſurdity of theſe prejudices. It will undoubtedly entirely relinquiſh them; and all the merchants who conduct the ſame trade on their own bottoms, will follow its example.

THERE ARE SEASONS MORE OR LESS FAVORABLE TO THE SLAVE TRADE.

THERE are abuſes of the utmoſt conſequence, to be reformed in this voyage, which is naturally unhealthy. Thoſe who engage in it commonly fall into two great miſtakes. Dupes to a mercenary diſpoſition, the privateers pay more regard to the port than to the diſpatch of their veſſels; a circumſtance which neceſſarily prolongs the voyage, which every thing ſhould induce them to ſhorten as much as poſſible. Another inconvenience ſtill more dangerous, is, the cuſtom they have of ſailing from Europe at all times; though the regularity of the winds and the currents hath determined the moſt proper ſeaſon for arriving at theſe latitudes.

THIS bad practice hath given riſe to the diſtinction of the great and little voyage. The little voyage is the ſtraighteſt and ſhorteſt. It is no more than eighteen hundred leagues to the moſt diſtant ports where there are ſlaves. It may be performed in thirty-five or forty days, from the beginning of September to the end of November; becauſe from the time of ſetting out to the time of arrival, the winds and the currents are favourable. It is even poſſible to attempt it in December, January, and February, but with leſs ſecurity and ſucceſs.

SAILING

SAILING is no longer practicable in theſe latitudes, from the beginning of March to the end of Auguſt. The ſhips would have continually to ſtruggle againſt the violent currents which run northward, and againſt the ſouth-eaſt wind, which conſtantly blows. Experience has taught navigators, that during this ſeaſon, they muſt keep at a diſtance from the ſhore, get into the open ſea, ſail towards the ſouth as far as twenty-ſix or twenty-eight degrees betwixt Africa and Brazil, and afterwards draw gradually nearer and nearer to Guinea, in order to land at a hundred and fifty or two hundred leagues to windward of the port where they are to diſembark. This route is two thouſand five hundred leagues, and requires ninety or a hundred days ſail.

THIS great rout, independent of its length, deprives them of the moſt favourable time for trade and for returning. The ſhips meet with calms, are thwarted with winds, and carried away by currents; water fails them, the proviſions are ſpoiled, and the ſlaves are ſeized with the ſcurvy. Other calamities not leſs fatal, often increaſe the danger that attends this expedition. The negroes to the north of the Line, are ſubject to the ſmall-pox, which, by a ſingularity very diſtreſſing, ſeldom breaks out among this people till after the age of fourteen. If this contagious diſtemper affects a ſhip which is at her moorings, there are ſeveral known methods to leſſen its violence. But a ſhip attacked by it, while on its paſſage to America, often loſes the whole cargo of ſlaves. Thoſe who are born to the ſouth of the Line, avoid this diſeaſe by another, which is a kind of virulent ulcer, whoſe malignity is more violent and more irrita-

ble on the ſea, and which is never radically cured. Phyſicians ought perhaps, to obſerve this double effect of the ſmall-pox among the negroes which is, that it favours thoſe who are born beyond the Equator, and never attacks the others in their infancy. The number and variety of effects ſometimes afford occaſion for the inveſtigation of the cauſes of diſorders, and for the diſcovery of remedies proper for them.

THOUGH all the nations, concerned in the African trade, are equally intereſted in preſerving the ſlaves in their paſſage, they do not all attend to it with the ſame care. They all feed them with beans mixed with a ſmall quantity of rice; but they differ in other reſpects in their manner of treating them. The Engliſh, Dutch, and Danes, keep the men conſtantly in irons, and frequently hand-cuff the women: the ſmall number of hands they have on board their ſhips obliges them to this ſeverity. The French, who have great numbers, allows them more liberty; three or four days after their departure they take off all their fetters. All theſe nations, eſpecially the Engliſh, are too negligent with regard to the intercourſe between the ſailors with the women ſlaves. This irregularity occaſions the death of three-fourths of thoſe whom the Guinea voyage deſtroys every year. None but the Portugueſe, during their paſſage, are ſecured againſt revolts and other calamities. This advantage is a conſequence of the care they take to man their veſſels only with the negroes to whom they have given their freedom. The ſlaves encouraged by the converſation and condition of their countrymen, form a tolerably favourable idea of the deſtiny that awaits

awaits them. The quietneſs of their behaviour induces the Portugueſe to grant the two ſexes the happineſs of living together: an indulgence, which, if allowed in other veſſels, would be productive of the greateſt inconveniencies.

It is a general received opinion, that the blacks, who are brought from America, are now ſold at a higher price than they were formerly. This is a miſtake ariſing from this circumſtance, that the purchaſer pays attention only to the number of thoſe arbitrary marks of value which he gives, inſtead of reckoning the quantity of thoſe commodities he delivers in exchange. This proportion, which is the only exact one, will make him ſenſible that the price of negroes hath not advanced; ſince they are purchaſed with the ſame quantity of thoſe commodities as they were in the earlieſt times. It is the value of money that hath changed, and not that of the unhappy ſlave.

METHOD OF SELLING THE SLAVES IN AMERICA.

ALL nations do not ſell their ſlaves in the ſame manner. The Engliſhman, who hath promiſcuouſly bought up whatever preſented itſelf in the general market, ſells his cargo by wholeſale. A ſingle merchant buys it entire; and the planters parcel it out. What they reject is ſent into foreign colonies, either by ſmuggling, or with permiſſion. The cheapneſs of a negro is a greater object to the buyer to induce him to purchaſe, than the badneſs of his conſtitution is to deter him from it. Theſe traders will one day be convinced of the abſurdity of ſuch a conduct.

THE Portugueſe, Dutch, French, and Danes, who have no way of diſpoſing of the infirm and weakly ſlaves, never charge themſelves with them in Guinea. They all divide their cargoes, according to the demands of the proprietors of plantations. The bargain is made for ready money, or for credit, according as the circumſtances vary. When the terms are fixed for eighteen months, as it happens but too often in the French colonies, the negro's labour muſt by that time have brought in two-thirds of the price paid for him. If that does not always happen, it is owing to particular reaſons, the detail of which would be ſuperfluous.

WRETCHED CONDITION OF THE SLAVES.

IN America it is generally believed and aſſerted, that the Africans are equally incapable of reaſon and of virtue. The following well-authenticated fact will enable us to judge of this opinion.

AN Engliſh ſhip that traded in Guinea in 1752, was obliged to leave the ſurgeon behind, whoſe bad ſtate of health did not permit him to continue at ſea. Murray, for that was his name, was there endeavouring to recover his health, when a Dutch veſſel drew near the coaſt, put the blacks in irons, whom curioſity had brought to the ſhore, and inſtantly ſailed off with their booty.

THOSE who intereſted themſelves for theſe unhappy people, incenſed at ſo baſe a treachery, inſtantly ran to Cudjoc, who ſtopped them at his door, and aſked them what they were in ſearch of. *The white man, who is with you,*

you, replied they, *who ſhould be put to death, becauſe his brethren have carried off ours. The Europeans*, anſwered the generous hoſt, *who have carried off our countrymen, are barbarians; kill them whenever you can find them. But he who lodges with me is a good man, he is my friend; my houſe is his fortreſs; I am his ſoldier, and I will defend him. Before you can get at him, you ſhall paſs over my body. O my friends, what juſt man would ever enter my doors, if I had ſuffered my habitation to be ſtained with the blood of an innocent man?* This diſcourſe appeaſed the rage of the blacks: they retired aſhamed of the deſign that had brought them there; and ſome days after acknowledged to Murray himſelf, how happy they were that they had not committed a crime, which would have occaſioned them a perpetual remorſe.

THIS event renders it probable, that the firſt impreſſions which the Africans receive in the New world, determine them either to good or bad actions. Repeated experience confirms the truth of this obſervation: thoſe who fall to the ſhare of a humane maſter, willingly eſpouſe his intereſts. They inſenſibly adopt the ſpirit and manners of the place where they are fixed. This attachment is ſometimes exalted even into heroiſm. A Portugueſe ſlave who had fled into the woods, having learnt that his old maſter had been taken up for an aſſaſſination, came into the court of juſtice, and acknowledged himſelf guilty of the fact; let himſelf be put into priſon in lieu of his maſter; brought falſe, though judicial, proofs of his pretended crime, and ſuffered death inſtead of the guilty perſon. Actions of a leſs heroical nature, though not uncommon, have touched the

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hearts of ſome coloniſts. Several would readily ſay, as Sir William Gooch, governor of Virginia, when he was blamed for returning the ſalutation of a black, *I ſhould be very ſorry that a ſlave ſhould be more polite than myſelf.*

But there are barbarians, who conſidering pity as a weakneſs, delight in making their dependents perpetually ſenſible of their tyranny. They juſtly, however, receive their puniſhment in the negligence, infidelity, deſertion, and ſuicide of the deplorable victims of their inſatiable avarice. Some of theſe unfortunate men, eſpecially thoſe of Mina, courageouſly put an end to their lives, under the firm perſuaſion, that they ſhall immediately after death riſe again in their own country, which they look upon as the fineſt in the world. A vindictive ſpirit furniſhes others with reſources ſtill more fatal. Inſtructed from their infancy in the arts of poiſons, which grow, as it were, under their hands, they employ them in the deſtruction of the cattle, the horſes, the mules, the companions of their ſlavery, and of every living thing employed in the cultivation of the lands of their oppreſſors. In order to remove from themſelves all ſuſpicion, they firſt exerciſe their cruelties on their wives, their children, their miſtreſſes, and on every thing that is deareſt to them. In this dreadful project, that can only be the reſult of deſpair, they take the double pleaſure of delivering their ſpecies from a yoke more dreadful than death, and of leaving their tyrant in a wretched ſtate of miſery, that is an image of their own condition. The fear of puniſhment does not check them. They are ſcarce ever known to have any kind of foreſight; and they are, moreover, certain of concealing their crimes, being

being proof againſt tortures. By means of one of thoſe inexplicable contradictions of the human heart, though common to all people, whether civilized or not, negroes, though naturally cowards, give many inſtances of an unſhaken firmneſs of ſoul. The ſame organiſation which ſubjects them to ſervitude, from the indolence of their mind, and the relaxation of their fibres, inſpires them with vigour and unparalleled reſolution for extraordinary actions. They are cowards all their life-time and heroes only for an inſtant. One of theſe miſerable men has been known to cut his wriſt off with the ſtroke of a hatchet, rather than purchaſe his liberty, by ſubmitting to the vile office of an executioner.

NOTHING, however, is more miſerable than the condition of a black, throughout the whole American Archipelago. A narrow, unwholeſome hut, without any conveniencies, ſerves him for a dwelling. His bed is a hurdle, fitter to put the body to torture than to afford it any eaſe. Some earthen pots, and a few wooden diſhes are his furniture. The coarſe linen which covers part of his body, neither ſecures him from the inſupportable heats of the day, nor the dangerous dews of the night. The food he is ſupplied with, is caſſava, ſalt beef, cod, fruits and roots, which are ſcarce able to ſupport his miſerable exiſtence. Deprived of every enjoyment, he is condemned to a perpetual drudgery in a burning climate, conſtantly under the rod of an unfeeling maſter.

THE condition of theſe ſlaves, though every where deplorable, is ſomething different in the colonies. Thoſe who

who have very extenſive eſtates, generally give them a portion of land, to ſupply them with the neceſſaries of life. They are allowed to employ a part of the Sunday in cultivating it, and the few moments that on other days they ſpare from the time allotted for their meals. In the ſmaller iſlands, the coloniſt himſelf furniſhes their food, the greateſt part of which hath been imported by ſea from other countries. Ignorance, avarice, or poverty, have introduced into ſome colonies, a method of providing for the ſubſiſtence of negroes, equally deſtructive both to the men and the plantation. They are allowed on Saturday, or ſome other day, to work in the neighbouring plantations, or to plunder them, in order to procure a maintenance for the reſt of the week.

Besides theſe differences ariſing from the particular ſituation of the ſettlements in the American iſlands, each European nation hath a manner of treating ſlaves peculiar to itſelf. The Spaniards make them the companions of their indolence; the Portugueſe, the inſtruments of their debauch; the Dutch, the victims of their avarice; the Engliſh, who eaſily derive their ſubſiſtence from their eſtates on the northern continent, are leſs attentive to the management of them than any other nations. If they never promote inter-marriages among the blacks, they yet receive with kindneſs, as the gifts of nature, thoſe children that are the produce of leſs reſtrained connections, and ſeldom exact from the fathers or mothers a toil or a tribute above their ſtrength. Slaves, by them, are conſidered merely as natural productions, which ought neither to be uſed, nor deſtroyed without neceſſity; but they never treat them with

with familiarity: they never ſmile upon them, nor ſpeak to them. One would think they were afraid of letting them ſuſpect, that nature could have given any one mark of reſemblance betwixt them and their ſlaves. This makes them hate the Engliſh. The French, leſs haughty, leſs diſdainful, conſider the Africans as a ſpecies of moral beings; and theſe unhappy men, ſenſible of the honour of ſeeing themſelves almoſt treated like rational creatures, ſeem to forget that their maſter is impatient of making his fortune, that he always exacts labours from them above their ſtrength, and frequently lets them want ſubſiſtence.

THE opinions of the Europeans have alſo ſome influence on the condition of the negroes of America. The proteſtants, who are not actuated by a deſire of making proſelytes, ſuffer them to live in Mohammetiſm, or in that idolatry in which they were born, under a pretence, that it would be injurious to keep their *brethren in Chriſt* in a ſtate of ſlavery. The catholics think themſelves obliged to give them ſome inſtruction, and to baptize them; but their charity extends no further than the bare ceremonies of a baptiſm, which is wholly uſeleſs and unneceſſary to men who dread not the pains of hell, to which, they ſay, they are accuſtomed in this life.

THE torments they experience in their ſlavery, and the diſorders to which they are liable in America, both contribute to render them inſenſible to the dread of future puniſhment. They are particularly ſubject to two diſeaſes, the yaws, and a complaint that affects their ſtomach. The firſt effect of this laſt diſorder is, to turn their ſkin and

complexion to an olive colour. Their tongue becomes white, and they are overpowered by ſuch a deſire of ſleeping that they cannot reſiſt: they grow faint, and are incapable of the leaſt exerciſe. It is a languor, and a general relaxation of the whole machine. In this ſituation they are in ſuch a ſtate of deſpondency, that they ſuffer themſelves to be knocked down rather than walk. The loathing which they have of mild and wholeſome food, is attended with a kind of rage for every thing that is ſalted or ſpiced. Their legs ſwell, their breath is obſtructed, and few of them ſurvive this diſorder. The greateſt part die of ſuffocation, after having ſuffered and languiſhed for ſeveral months.

The thickneſs of their blood, which appears to be the ſource of theſe diſorders, may proceed from ſeveral cauſes. One of the principal, is, undoubtedly, the melancholy which muſt ſeize theſe men who are violently torn away from their country, are fettered like criminals, who find themſelves all on a ſudden on the ſea, where they continue for two months or ſix weeks, and who, from the midſt of a beloved family, paſs under the yoke of an unknown people, from whom they expect the moſt dreadful puniſhments. A ſpecies of food, new to them, and diſagreeable in itſelf, diſguſts them in their paſſage. At their arrival in the iſlands, the proviſions that are diſtributed to them, are neither good in quality, nor ſufficient to ſupport them. To complete their miſery, ſeveral among them have contracted in Africa, the habit of eating a certain kind of earth, which gratified their taſte, without being in the leaſt hurtful to them: they ſeek for ſomething that reſembles this,

this, and chance has thrown in their way a ſoft ſtone of a deep yellow, which totally ſpoils their ſtomach.

THE yaws, which is the ſecond diſorder peculiar to negroes, diſcovers itſelf by blotches that are dry, hard, callous, and round, ſometimes covered by the ſkin, but moſt commonly ulcerated, and ſprinkled, as it were, with a whitiſh flower intermixed with yellow. The yaws have been confounded with the venereal diſeaſe, becauſe the ſame remedy is proper for both. This opinion, though pretty general, has leſs to ſupport it, than at firſt ſight it appears to have.

ALL the negroes, as well male as female, who come from Guinea, or are born in the iſlands, have the yaws once in their lives: it is a diſeaſe they muſt neceſſarily paſs through; but there is no inſtance of any of them being attacked with it a ſecond time, after having been radically cured. The Europeans ſeldom or never catch this diſorder, notwithſtanding the frequent and daily connection which they have with the negro women. Theſe women ſuckle the children of the white people, but do not give them the yaws. How is it poſſible to reconcile theſe facts, which are inconteſtible, with the ſyſtem which phyſicians ſeem to have adopted with regard to the nature of the yaws? Can it not be allowed, that the ſemen, the blood, and ſkin of the negroes, are ſuſceptible of a virus peculiar to their ſpecies? The cauſe of this diſorder, perhaps, is owing to that which occaſions their colour: one difference is naturally productive of another: and there is no being or quality that exiſts abſolutely detached from others in nature.

But whatever this diſorder may be, it is evident from the moſt accurate and undeniable calculations, that there dies every year in America, the ſeventh part of the blacks that are imported thither from Guinea. Fourteen hundred thouſand unhappy beings, who are now in the European colonies of the New world, are the unfortunate remains of nine millions of ſlaves that have been conveyed thither. This dreadful deſtruction cannot be the effect of the climate, which is nearly the ſame as that of Africa, much leſs of the diſorders, to which, in the opinion of all obſervers, but few fall a ſacrifice. It muſt originate from the manner in which theſe ſlaves are governed: and might not an error of this nature be corrected?

IN WHAT MANNER THE CONDITION OF SLAVES MIGHT BE RENDERED MORE SUPPORTABLE.

The firſt ſtep neceſſary in this reformation would be to attend minutely to the natural and moral ſtate of man. Thoſe who go to purchaſe blacks on the coaſts of ſavage nations; thoſe who convey them to America, and eſpecially thoſe who direct their labours, often think themſelves obliged, from their ſituation, and frequently too for the ſake of their own ſafety, to oppreſs theſe wretched men. The ſoul of theſe managers of ſlaves, loſt to all ſenſe of compaſſion, is ignorant of every motive to enforce obedience, but thoſe of fear or ſeverity, and theſe they exerciſe with all the harſhneſs of a temporary authority. If the proprietors of plantations would ceaſe to regard the care of their ſlaves, as an occupation below them, and conſider it as an office to which it is their duty to attend, they would

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ſoon diſcard theſe errors that ariſe from a ſpirit of cruelty. The hiſtory of all mankind would ſhew them, that, in order to render ſlavery uſeful, it is, at leaſt, neceſſary to make it eaſy; that force does not prevent the rebellion o the mind; that it is the maſter's intereſt that the ſlave ſhould be attached to life, and that nothing is to be expected from him the moment that he no longer fears to die.

THIS principle of enlightened reaſon, derived from the ſentiments of humanity, would contribute to the reformation of ſeveral abuſes. Men would acknowledge the neceſſity of lodging, clothing, and giving proper food to beings condemned to the moſt painful bondage that ever has exiſted ſince the infamous origin of ſlavery. They would be ſenſible that it is naturally impoſſible that thoſe who reap no advantage from their own labours, can have the ſame underſtanding, the ſame œconomy, the ſame activity, the ſame ſtrength, as the man who enjoys the produce of his induſtry. That political moderation would gradually take place, which conſiſts in leſſening of labour, alleviating puniſhment, and rendering to man part of his rights, in order to reap with greater certainty the benefit of thoſe duties that are impoſed upon him. The preſervation of a great number of ſlaves, whom diſorders occaſioned by vexation or regret deprive the colonies of, would be the natural conſequence of ſo wiſe a regulation. Far from aggravating the yoke that oppreſſes them, every kind of attention ſhould be given to make it eaſy, and to diſſipate even the idea of it, by favouring a natural taſte that ſeems peculiar to the negroes.

THEIR organs are extremely ſenſible of the powers of muſic. Their ear is ſo true, that in their dances, the time of a ſong makes them ſpring up a hundred at once, ſtriking the earth at the ſame inſtant. Enchanted, as it were, with the voice of a ſinger, or the tone of a ſtringed inſtrument, a vibration of the air is the ſpirit that actuates all the bodies of theſe men: a ſound agitates, tranſports, and throws them into extaſies. In their common labours, the motion of their arms, or of their feet, is always in cadence. At all their employments they ſing, and ſeem always as if they were dancing. Muſic animates their courage, and rouzes them from their indolence. The marks of this extreme ſenſibility to harmony are viſible in all the muſcles of their bodies, which are always naked. Poets and muſicians by nature, they make the words ſubſervient to the muſic, by a licence they arbitrarily aſſume of lengthening or ſhortening them, in order to accommodate them to an air that pleaſes them. Whenever any object or incident ſtrikes a negro, he inſtantly makes it the ſubject of a ſong. In all ages this has been the origin of poetry. Three or four words, which are alternately repeated by the ſinger and the general chorus, ſometimes conſtitute the whole poem. Five or ſix bars of muſic compoſe the whole length of the ſong. A circumſtance that appears ſingular, is, that the ſame air, though merely a continual repetition of the ſame tones; takes entire poſſeſſion of them, makes them work or dance for ſeveral hours; neither they, nor even the white men, are diſguſted with that tedious uniformity which theſe repetitions might naturally occaſion. This particular attachment is owing to the warmth and expreſſion

preſſion which they introduce into their ſongs. Their airs are generally double time. None of them tend to inſpire them with pride. Thoſe intended to excite tenderneſs, promote rather a kind of languor. Even thoſe which are moſt lively, carry in them a certain expreſſion of melancholy. This is the higheſt entertainment to minds of great ſenſibility.

So ſtrong an inclination for muſic might become a powerful motive of action under the direction of ſkilful hands. Feſtivals, games and rewards might on this account be eſtabliſhed among them. Theſe amuſements, conducted with judgment, would prevent that ſtupidity ſo common among ſlaves, eaſe their labours, and preſerve them from that conſtant melancholy which conſumes them, and ſhortens their days. After having provided for the preſervation of the blacks exported from Africa, the welfare of thoſe who are born in the iſlands themſelves would then be conſidered.

The negroes are not averſe from the propagation of their ſpecies even in the chains of ſlavery. But it is the cruelty of the maſters which hath effectually prevented them from complying with this great end of nature. Such hard labour is required from negro women, both before and after their pregnancy, that their children are either abortive, or live but a ſhort time after delivery. Mothers, rendered deſperate by the puniſhments which the weakneſs of their condition occaſions them, ſnatch ſometimes their children from the cradle, in order to ſtrangle them in their arms, and ſacrifice them with a fury mingled with a ſpirit of revenge and compaſſion, that they may not become the property

property of their cruel maſters. This barbarity, the horror of which muſt be wholly imputed to the Europeans, will, perhaps, convince them of their error. Their ſenſibility will be rouzed, and engage them to pay a greater attention to their true intereſts. They will find that by committing ſuch outrages againſt humanity, they injure themſelves; and if they do not become the benefactors of their ſlaves, they will at leaſt ceaſe to be their executioners.

They will, perhaps, reſolve to ſet free thoſe mothers who ſhall have brought up a conſiderable number of children to the age of ſix years. The allurements of liberty are the moſt powerful that can influence the human heart. The negro women, animated by the hope of ſo great a bleſſing, to which all would aſpire, and few would be able to obtain, would make neglect and infamy be ſucceeded by a virtuous emulation to bring up children, whoſe number and preſervation would ſecure to them freedom and tranquility.

After having taken wiſe meaſures not to deprive their plantations of thoſe ſuccours ariſing from the extraordinary fruitfulneſs of the negro women; they will attend to the care of conducting and extending cultivation by means of population, and without foreign expedients. Every thing invites them to eſtabliſh this eaſy and natural ſyſtem.

There are ſome powers, whoſe ſettlements in the American iſles every day acquire extent, and there are none whoſe manual labour does not continually increaſe. Theſe lands, therefore, conſtantly require a greater number of hands to clear them. Africa, where all Europeans

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go to recruit the population of the colonies, gradual'y furniſhes them with fewer men, and ſupplies them at the ſame time with worſe ſlaves and at a higher price. This ſource for the obtaining ſlaves will be gradually more and more exhauſted. But were this change in trade as chimerical, as it ſeems to be not far diſtant, it is nevertheleſs certain that a great number of ſlaves, drawn out of a remote region, periſh in their paſſage, or in the New world; and that when they come to America they are ſold at a very advanced price; that there are few of them whoſe natural term of life is not ſhortened; and that the greater part of thoſe who attain a wretched old age, are extremely ignorant, and being accuſtomed from their infancy to idleneſs, are frequently very unfit for the employments to which they are deſtined, and are in a continual ſtate of deſpondency, on account of their being ſeparated from their country. If we are not miſtaken in our opinion, cultivators born in the American iſlands themſelves, always breathing their native air, brought up without any other expence than what conſiſts in a cheap food, habituated in early life to labour by their own parents, endowed for a ſufficient ſhare of underſtanding, or a ſingular aptitude for all the uſeful arts; ſuch cultivators cannot but be preferable to ſlaves that have been ſold and live in a perpetual exile and reſtraint.

THE method of ſubſtituting in the place of foreign negroes thoſe of the colonies themſelves, is very obvious. It wholly conſiſts in ſuperintending the black children that are born in the iſlands, in confining to their workhouſes that multitude of ſlaves who carry about with them their worthleſſneſs,

leſſneſs, their licentiouſneſs, and their luxury and inſolence of their maſters, in all the towns and ports of Europe; but above all, in requiring of navigators who frequent the African coaſts, that they ſhould form their cargo of an equal number of men and women, or even of a majority of women, during ſome years, in order to reduce that diſproportion which obtains the two ſexes.

This laſt precaution, by putting the pleaſures of love within the reach of all the blacks, would contribute to their eaſe and multiplication. Theſe unhappy men, forgetting the weight of their chains, would with tranſport ſee themſelves live again in their children. The majority of them are faithful, even to death, to thoſe negro women whom love and ſlavery have aſſigned to them for their companions; they treat them with that compaſſion which the wretched mutually derive from one another even in the rigour of their condition; they comfort them under the load of their employments; they ſympathize, at leaſt, with them, when, through exceſs of labour, or want of food, the mother can only offer her child a breaſt that is dry, or bathed in her tears. The women, on their part, though tied down to no reſtrictions of chaſtity, are fixed in their attachments; provided that the vanity of being beloved by white people does not render them inconſtant. Unhappily this is a temptation to infidelity, to which they have too often opportunities to yield.

Those who have inquired into the cauſes of this taſte for black women, which appears to be ſo depraved in the Europeans, have found it to ariſe from the nature of the climate, which under the torrid zone irreſiſtibly excites men

men to the pleaſures of love; the facility of gratifying this inſurmountable inclination without reſtraint, and without the trouble of a long purſuit; from a certain captivating attraction of beauty, diſcoverable in black women, as ſoon as cuſtom hath once reconciled the eye to their colour; but principally from a warmth of conſtitution, which gives them the power of inſpiring and returning the moſt ardent tranſports. Thus they revenge themſelves, as it were, for the humiliating deſpondence of their condition, by the violent and immoderate paſſions which they excite in their maſters; nor do our ladies, in Europe, poſſeſs in a more exalted degree the art of waſting and running out large fortunes than the negro women. But thoſe of Africa have the ſuperiority over thoſe of Europe, in the real paſſion they have for the men who purchaſe them. The happy diſcovery and prevention of conſpiracies that would have deſtroyed all their oppreſſors by the hands of their ſlaves, hath been often owing to the faithful attachment of theſe negro women. The double tyranny of theſe unworthy uſurpers of the eſtates and liberty of ſuch a number of people, deſerved, doubtleſs, ſuch a puniſhment.

SLAVERY IS ENTIRELY REPUGNANT TO HUMANITY, REASON AND JUSTICE.

WE will not here ſo far debaſe ourſelves as to enlarge the ignominious liſt of thoſe writers who devote their abilities to juſtify by policy what morality condemns. In an age where ſo many errors are boldly laid open, it would be unpardonable to conceal any truth that is intereſting to humanity. If whatever we have hitherto advanced

advanced hath ſeemingly tended only to alleviate the burden of ſlavery, the reaſon is, that it was firſt neceſſary to give ſome comfort to thoſe unhappy beings, whom we cannot ſet free; and convince their oppreſſors that they are cruel to the prejudice of their real intereſts. But, in the mean time, until ſome conſiderable revolution ſhall make the evidence of this great truth felt, it may not be improper to purſue this object further. We ſhall then firſt prove, that there is no reaſon of ſtate that can authoriſe ſlavery. We ſhall not be afraid to cite to the tribunal of reaſon and juſtice thoſe governments which tolerate this cruelty, or which even are not aſhamed to make it the baſis of their power.

MONTESQUIEU could not prevail upon himſelf to treat the queſtion concerning ſlavery in a ſerious light. In reality it is degrading reaſon to employ it, I will not ſay in defending, but even in refuting an abuſe ſo repugnant to it. Whoever juſtifies ſo odious a ſyſtem, deſerves the utmoſt contempt from a philoſopher, and from the negro a ſtab with his dagger.

IF you touch me, ſaid Clariſſa to Lovelace, that moment I kill myſelf; and I would ſay to him, who attempted to deprive me of my liberty, If you approach me, I will ſtab you. In this caſe, I ſhould reaſon better than Clariſſa; becauſe, defending my liberty, or, which is the ſame thing, my life, is my primary duty; to regard that of another, is only a ſeconday conſideration; and if all other circumſtances were the ſame, the death of a criminal is more conformable to juſtice than that of an innocent perſon.

WILL

WILL it be ſaid, that he who wants to make me a ſlave does me no injury, but that he only makes uſe of his rights? Where are thoſe rights? Who hath ſtamped upon them ſo ſacred a character as to ſilence mine? From nature I hold the right of ſelf-defence; nature, therefore, has not given to another the right of attacking me. If thou thinkeſt thyſelf authoriſed to oppreſs me, becauſe thou art ſtronger and more ingenious than I am; do not complain if my vigorous arm ſhall plunge a dagger into thy breaſt; do not complain, when in thy tortured entrails thou ſhalt feel the pangs of death conveyed by poiſon into thy food: I am ſtronger and more ingenious than thou: fall a victim, therefore, in thy turn; and expiate the crime of having been an oppreſſor.

HE who ſupports the ſyſtem of ſlavery is the enemy of the whole human race. He divides it into two ſocieties of legal aſſaſſins; the oppreſſors and the oppreſſed. It is the ſame thing as proclaiming to the world, if you would preſerve your life, inſtantly take away mine, for I want to have yours.

But the right of ſlavery, you ſay, extends only to the right of labour and the privation of liberty, not of life. What! does not the maſter, who diſpoſes of my ſtrength at his pleaſure, likewiſe diſpoſe of my life, which depends on the voluntary and proper uſe of my faculties? What is exiſtence to him, who has not the diſpoſal of it? I cannot kill my ſlave; but I can make him bleed under the whip of an executioner, I can overwhelm him with ſorrows, drudgery and want; I can injure him every way,

and ſecretly undermine the principles and ſprings of his life; I can ſmother by ſlow puniſhments, the wretched infant which a negro woman carries in her womb. Thus the laws protects the ſlave againſt a violent death, only to leave to my cruelty the right of making him die by degrees.

Let us proceed a ſtep further: the right of ſlavery is that of perpetrating all ſorts of crimes: thoſe crimes which invade property; for ſlaves are not ſuffered to have any even in their own perſons: thoſe crimes which deſtroy perſonal ſafety; for the ſlave may be ſacrificed to the caprice of his maſter: thoſe crimes which make modeſty ſhudder.—My blood riſes at theſe horrid images. I deteſt, I abhor ſuch beings, victims and executioners, if they are not to become better, may they be annihilated!

Further, that I may diſcloſe without reſerve my ſentiments on this ſubject. Cartouche, the highwayman, ſitting at the foot of a tree in a deep foreſt, calculating the profits and loſſes of his robberies, the rewards and pay of his aſſociates, and adjuſting with them the ideas of proportion and diſtributive juſtice; this Cartouche is not a very different character from that of the privateer, who reclined on his counter, with his pen in his hand, ſettles the number of attacks which he can order to be made on the coaſts of Guinea; who deliberately examines how many firelocks each negro will coſt him, in order to ſupport the war which is to furniſh him with ſlaves; how many iron fetters to confine him aboard, how many whips to make him work: how much each drop of blood will be worth to him with which each negro will water his plantation;

tation: if the black woman will contribute more to his eſtate by the labours of her hands, or by thoſe of bearing children?—What think you of this parallel?—The highwayman attacks you and takes your money; the trader carries off even your perſon. The one invades the rights of ſociety, the other, thoſe of nature. This certainly is the truth; and if there exiſted a religion which authoriſed, which tolerated, even by its ſilence, ſuch enormities; if, moreover, occupied by idle or factious queſtions, it did not eternally denounce vengeance againſt the authors or inſtruments of this tyranny; if it made it criminal for a ſlave to break his bonds; if it did not expel the unjuſt judge who condemns the fugitive to death; if ſuch a religion exiſted, its miniſters ought to be maſſacred under the ruins of their altars.

But theſe negroes, ſay they, are a race of men born for ſlavery; their diſpoſitions are narrow, treacherous, and wicked; they themſelves allow the ſuperiority of our underſtandings, and almoſt acknowledge the juſtice of our authority.

The minds of the negroes are contracted; becauſe ſlavery deſtroys all the ſprings of the ſoul. They are wicked; but not ſufficiently ſo with you. They are treacherous, becauſe they are under no obligation to ſpeak truth to their tyrants. They acknowledge the ſuperiority of our underſtandings; becauſe we have abuſed their ignorance: they allow the juſtice of our authority, becauſe we have abuſed their weakneſs. I might as well ſay, that the Indians are a ſpecies of men born to be cruſhed to death; becauſe there are fanatics among them, who throw

themſelves under the wheels of their idol's car before the temple of Jaguernat.

But theſe negroes, it is further urged, were born ſlaves. Barbarians, will you perſuade me, that a man can be the property of a ſovereign, a ſon the property of a father, a wife the property of her huſband, a domeſtic the property of a maſter, a negro the property of a planter?

But theſe ſlaves have ſold themſelves. Could a man ever by compact, or by an oath permit another to uſe and abuſe him? If he aſſented to this compact, or confirmed it by an oath, it was in a tranſport of ignorance or folly; and he is releaſed from it, the moment that he either knows himſelf, or his reaſon returns.

But they had been taken in war. What does this ſignify to you? Suffer the conqueror to make what ill uſe he pleaſes of his own victory. Why do you make yourſelves his accomplices.

But they were criminals condemned in their country to ſlavery. Who was it that condemned them? Do you not know, that in a deſpotic ſtate there is no criminal but the tyrant.

The ſubject of an abſolute prince is the ſame as the ſlave in a ſtate repugnant to nature. Every thing that contributes to keep a man in ſuch a ſtate is an attempt againſt his perſon. Every power which fixes him to the tyranny of one man, is the power of his enemies: and all thoſe who are about him are the authors or abettors of this violence.

lence. His mother, who taught him the firſt leſſons of obedience; his neighbour, who ſet him the example of it; his ſuperiors, who compelled him into this ſtate; and his equals, who led him into it by their opinion: all theſe are the miniſters and inſtruments of tyranny. The tyrant can do nothing of himſelf; he is only the firſt mover of thoſe efforts which all his ſubjects exert to their own mutual oppreſſion. He keeps them in a ſtate of perpetual war, which renders robberies, treaſons, aſſaſſinations lawful. Thus, like the blood which flows in his veins, all crimes originate from his heart, and return thither as to their primary ſource. Caligula uſed to ſay, that if the whole human race had but one head, he ſhould have taken pleaſure in cutting it off. Socrates would have ſaid, that if all crimes were heaped upon one head, that ſhould be the one which ought to be ſtruck off.

Let us, therefore, endeavour to make the light of reaſon and the ſentiments of nature take place of the blind ferocity of our anceſtors. Let us break the bonds of ſo many victims to our mercenary principles, ſhould we even be obliged to diſcard a commerce which is founded only on injuſtice, and whoſe object is luxury.

But even this is not neceſſary. There is no occaſion to give up thoſe conveniencies which cuſtom hath ſo much endeared to us. We may draw them from our colonies, without peopling them with ſlaves. Theſe productions may be cultivated by the hands of freemen, and then be reaped without remorſe.

The iſlands are filled with blacks, whoſe fetters have been broken. They ſucceſſively clear the ſmall plantations that have been given them, or which they have acquired by their induſtry. Such of theſe unhappy men, as ſhould recover their independence, would live in quiet upon the ſame manual labours, that would be then free and advantageous to them. The vaſſals of Denmark, who have lately been made free, have not abandoned their ploughs.

Is it then apprehended, that the facility of acquiring ſubſiſtence without labour on a ſoil naturally fertile, and of diſpenſing with the want of cloaths, would plunge theſe men in idleneſs? Why then do not the inhabitants of Europe confine themſelves to ſuch labours as are of indiſpenſible neceſſity? Why do they exhauſt their powers in laborious employments which tend only to the ſenſual gratifications of a frivilous imagination? There are amongſt us a thouſand profeſſions, ſome more laborious than others, which owe their origin to our inſtitutions. Human laws have given riſe to a variety of fictitious wants, which otherwiſe would never have had an exiſtence. By diſpoſing of every ſpecies of property according to their capricious inſtitutions, they have ſubjected an infinite number of people to the imperious will of their fellow-creatures, ſo far as even to make them ſing and dance for ſubſiſtence. We have amongſt us beings, formed like ourſelves, who have conſented to inter themſelves under mountains, to furniſh us with metals and with copper, perhaps to poiſon us: why do we imagine that the negroes are leſs dupes and leſs fooliſh than the Europeans?

At the time that we gradually confer liberty on theſe unhappy beings as a reward for their œconomy, their good behaviour, and their induſtry, we muſt be careful to ſubject them to our laws and manners, and to offer them our ſuperfluities. We muſt give them a country, give them intereſts to ſtudy, productions to cultivate, and an object adequate to their reſpective taſtes, and our colonies will never want hands, which being eaſed of their chains, will be more active and robuſt.

In order to overturn the whole ſyſtem of ſlavery, which is ſupported by paſſions ſo univerſal by laws ſo authentic, by the emulation of ſuch powerful nations, by prejudices ſtill more powerful, to what tribunal ſhall we refer the canſe of humanity, which ſo many men are in confederacy to betray? Sovereigns of the earth, you alone can bring about this revolution. If you do not ſport with the reſt of mortals, if you do not regard the power of kings as the right of a ſucceſsful plunder, and the obedience of ſubjects as artfully obtained from their ignorance, reflect on your own obligations. Refuſe the ſanction of your authority to the infamous and criminal traffic of men turned into ſo many herds of cattle, and this trade will ceaſe. For once unite for the happineſs of the world, thoſe powers and deſigns which have been ſo often exerted for its ruin. If ſome one among you would venture to found the expectation of this opulence and grandeur on the generoſity of all the reſt, he inſtantly becomes an enemy of mankind, who ought to be deſtroyed. You may carry fire and ſword into his territories. Your armies will ſoon

be

be inſpired with the ſacred enthuſiaſm of humanity. You will then perceive what difference virtue makes between men who ſuccour the oppreſſed, and mercenaries who ſerve tyrants.

But what am I ſaying? Let the ineffectual calls of humanity be no longer pleaded with the people and their maſters: perhaps, they have never been attended to in any public tranſactions. If then, ye nations of Europe, intereſt alone can exert its influence over you, liſten to me once more. Your ſlaves ſtand in no need either of your generoſity or your counſels, in order to break the ſacrilegious yoke of their oppreſſion. Nature ſpeaks a more powerful language than philoſophy, or intereſt. Some white people already maſſacred, have expiated a part of our crimes; already have two colonies of fugitive negroes been eſtabliſhed, to whom treaties and power give a perfect ſecurity from your attempts. Poiſon hath at different times been the inſtrument of their vengeance. Several have eluded your oppreſſion by a voluntary death. Theſe enterpriſes are ſo many indications of the impending ſtorm, and the negroes only want a chief, ſufficiently courageous, to lead them to vengeance and ſlaughter.

Where is this great man to be found, whom nature, perhaps, owes to the honour of the human ſpecies? Where is this new Spartacus, who will not find a Craſſus? Then will the *black code* be no more; and the *white code* will

will be a dreadful one, if the conqueror only regards the right of repriſals.

TILL this revolution takes place, the negroes groan under the yoke of oppreſſion, the deſcription of which cannot but intereſt us more and more in their deſtiny.

THE END.

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